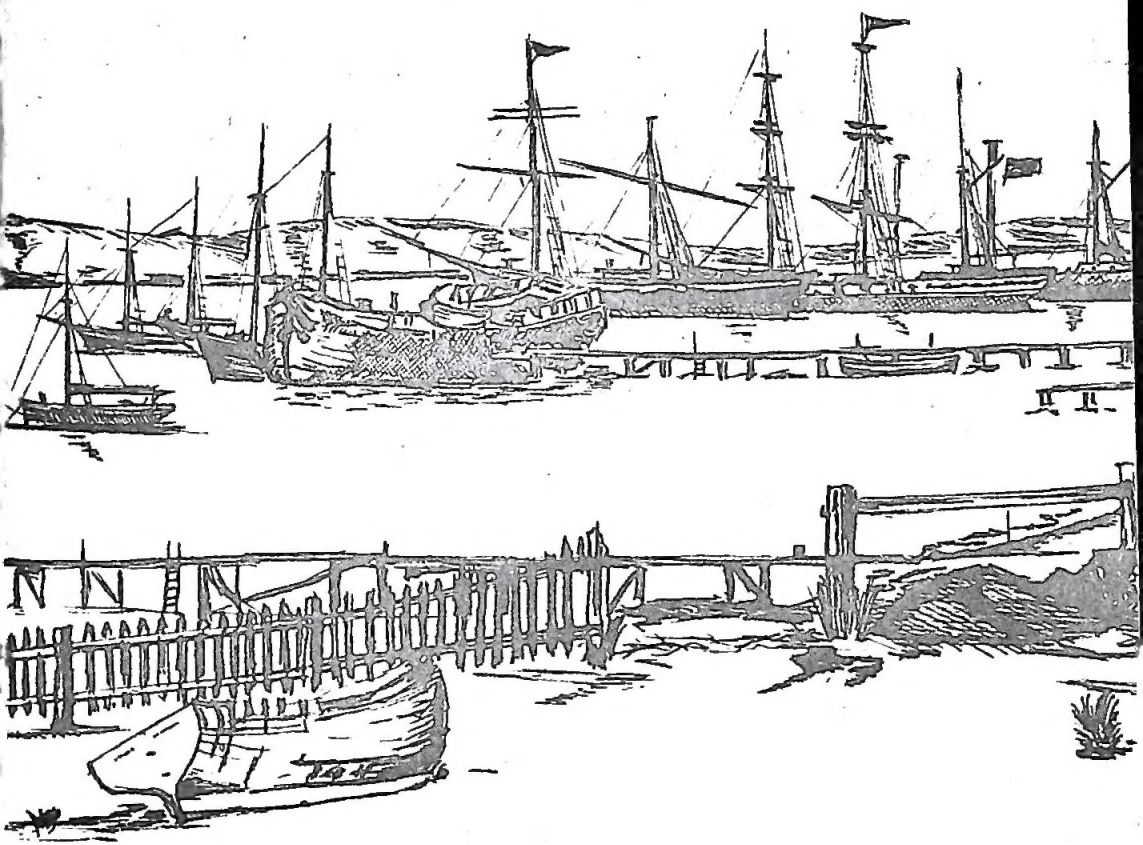
CONDEMNED AT STANLEY

by JOHN SMITH



CONDEMNED AT STANLEY

Notes and Sketches
on the Hulks and Wrecks
at Port Stanley
FALKLAND ISLANDS

by

JOHN SMITH

NATIONAL MARITIME HISTORICAL SOCIETY

New York Washington, D. C. San Francisco

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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I would especially like to thank Miss Madge Biggs M.B.E. for allowing me to make the drawing on the cover from a photograph which was taken by her grandfather Mr. William Biggs Sr.

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Introduction

The Falkland Islands lie 300 miles east of Cape Horn. In the days of the sailing ship they were a place for vessels damaged off that stormy headland to lick their wounds.

England took possession of the Islands in the 1830s because of their location; trade with the west coast of South America was increasing and more and more ships were trying to make the rounding—not always successfully. Also the Falklands formed a conveniently located naval base at a time when it looked as though coal would be the likely propellant for men-of-war rather than wind. Widely spaced coaling stations were a part of the strategy of empire.

The Islands' history before these events of 140 years ago is tangled..to the extent that Argentina to this day does not recognize the British claim to the Falklands off her southern shore. Argentina calls the archipelago the Islas Malvinas, because they were first settled in 1764 by Frenchmen from St. Malo. The French sold their claim to Spain. Argentina claimed the Islands when she and other Spanish colonies successfully revolted in the early years of the 19th Century. But earlier, simultaneous with the French settlement on the East Falkland, a British colony, including a fort, was set up on the West Falkland. The British commander, when he discovered the French settlement, formally served notice of Britain's claim to the Islands. The French rejected it—apart from these formalities the meeting was cordial. Neither knew that back in Europe the French claim had been sold to Spain..

There are murkier passages..periods later when the islands were abandoned by any authority and a band of sealers, gauchos, and cut-throats found haven there. American sealers and whalers contributed their share. If a representative of government appeared, he was murdered.

The American Navy added too to this wild history..a little gunboat diplomacy of dubious style. When in 1826 Argentina put a French settler from Hamburg named Vernet on the Islands as colonist and nominal governor, an attempt was made to prevent seal poaching. Vernet finally seized three American sealing schooners. The result was that the United States corvette LEXINGTON came and sacked Vernet's settlement and ruined him. Vernet never returned to the Islands. Again, when the British had taken charge, seal poaching continued as well as a policy of living off the land (wild pigs and wild cattle) by American whalers and sealers.

When a couple of American captains were arrested by the British governor, the United States Navy corvette GERMANTOWN was summoned from Montevideo and took a position off the courthouse at Stanley, with tompions removed from her guns. The Americans got light sentences. That was in 1850. (Stanley is the name of the town. Port Stanley is the name of the three mile long harbor on which it stands.)

But that year marked a turning. Gold was discovered in California in 1848, but it was 1849 before word reached the East and the Gold Rush began. 777 vessels set out for the Golden Gate in 1849—the previous year there had been eight arrivals through those portals from the Atlantic. It was the greatest migration of mankind since the Crusades.

At least half this flotilla tried to make it around the Horn, the rest went by way of the Straits of Magellan. This was a hasty collection of anything that floated, good ships, bad ships. There were many cripples and Stanley, a superb harbor in the down-wind located Falklands, at last had an industry.

"When it is considered up to the year 1850, the few inhabitants subsisted on man-of-war rations sent annually from England, that there was neither cultivation nor trade, that the climate and soil were sufficiently bad to deter the usual class of emigrants from resorting to them, their only resource consisting of a few wild cattle...the progress which has been made during the past four years proves that the Falkland Islands have great advantages from their geographical position..."

Wages in the ship repair trade were as much as 25 shillings a day.

The repair of ships was a fitful business (shortly after Governor Rennie's optimistic remarks, the tapering-off of the Gold Rush was felt) but it continued for another sixty-odd years—sometimes weak, sometimes strong, depending on the moods of Cape Stiff and how many ships were hurt there.

Some of these vessels were so badly damaged that though they reached the Falklands, they were not worth repairing, or, alternately, their owners or insurors did not want to make a further investment in them. These craft were then condemned and put to use in a useful way as floating—or beached—storehouses. Commercial activity was strengthening—the stark little colony now had another industry on which it could depend; wool growing. The economy was showing health.

When I made a trip to the Falkland Islands in 1966 a number of these hulks were still in use. Like a vision from former times, they were grounded on the foreshores of the town of Stanley (population 1200) and served as jettyheads or storehouses. My purpose in going to the Falklands was to learn the state of the famous GREAT BRITAIN, beached three miles away from Stanley in Sparrow Cove. This grandfather of every ocean liner since, built in 1843, had voyaged to San

Francisco twice in the early 1880s as a sailing ship. Her engines had by then been taken out. On her third venture around Cape Horn, this time with a cargo of coal for Panama, she was partially dismasted and put back to Port Stanley. Repairing such a large ship (2735 gross tons) called for sending to England for new spars—the ship was 43 years old—and one gathers that she was rather happily condemned and put to local use. GREAT BRITAIN became the most famous hulk in Port Stanley and served as a floating storehouse from 1886 until 1933. She was then beached outside the harbor proper in a gesture of sentimentality rather than being taken to sea and sunk, as was originally proposed. It was sentimentality that took me to see her—I had been proposing for some years (originally to the National Maritime Museum in England in 1958) that she be preserved. It was not a new idea—Sir Henniker Heaton, Governor of the Falklands, had suggested saving the GREAT BRITAIN in 1936 but the idea died aborning in those hard times.

In the early 1960s I had tried to interest Philadelphia, situated by "the American Clyde" in bringing the GREAT BRITAIN there rather than have her rust away. The Delaware River is the cradle of American iron shipbuilding and it seemed a somewhat appropriate location for the first iron ocean liner to ever cross an ocean. Nothing came of this effort, either.

Now I was going to see if she could be refloated and brought to San Francisco. I discovered that the GREAT BRITAIN in her remote cove was at last getting tired—at the age of 123 she was beginning to crack in two. The Government asked me to broadcast this fact to the Islanders.

So a time element was introduced—there was not only a crack, but the fact that the Americans wanted her. A committee was formed in England under the capable chairmanship of Richard Goold-Adams with the naval architect Ewan Corlett as technical director. They persuaded a generous man from the Bahamas, Jack Hayward, who had already given Lundy Island to the British National Trust, to put up 150,000 pounds to refloat the GREAT BRITAIN and take her home to Bristol. The American threat was averted—with nobody more happy about the outcome than the Americans.

I was still on my way to Port Stanley when I first heard about the author of this booklet (except that he then hadn't written the booklet). "John Smith is the man to see about old ships.." I was told on the steamer DARWIN which then connected Montevideo and the Falklands. To my pleasure this remarkable ship graveyard had a curator. I hadn't been in town more than a few hours before the Second Mate of the DARWIN arranged for us to meet, and a lean young man in a Sherlock Holmes deerstalker cap appeared at my digs in the Ship Hotel. He had the keys for the CHARLES COOPER, arrived a hundred years before, and we were soon prowling the interior of that vessel, a storehouse for terra cotta pipe.

John came from Portsmouth, England and was in the crew of an exploration vessel that had put into the Falklands in the 1950s. He had married a local girl, went to work for the Falkland Islands Company, and increasingly turned his spare time to the sights in the town's front yard.

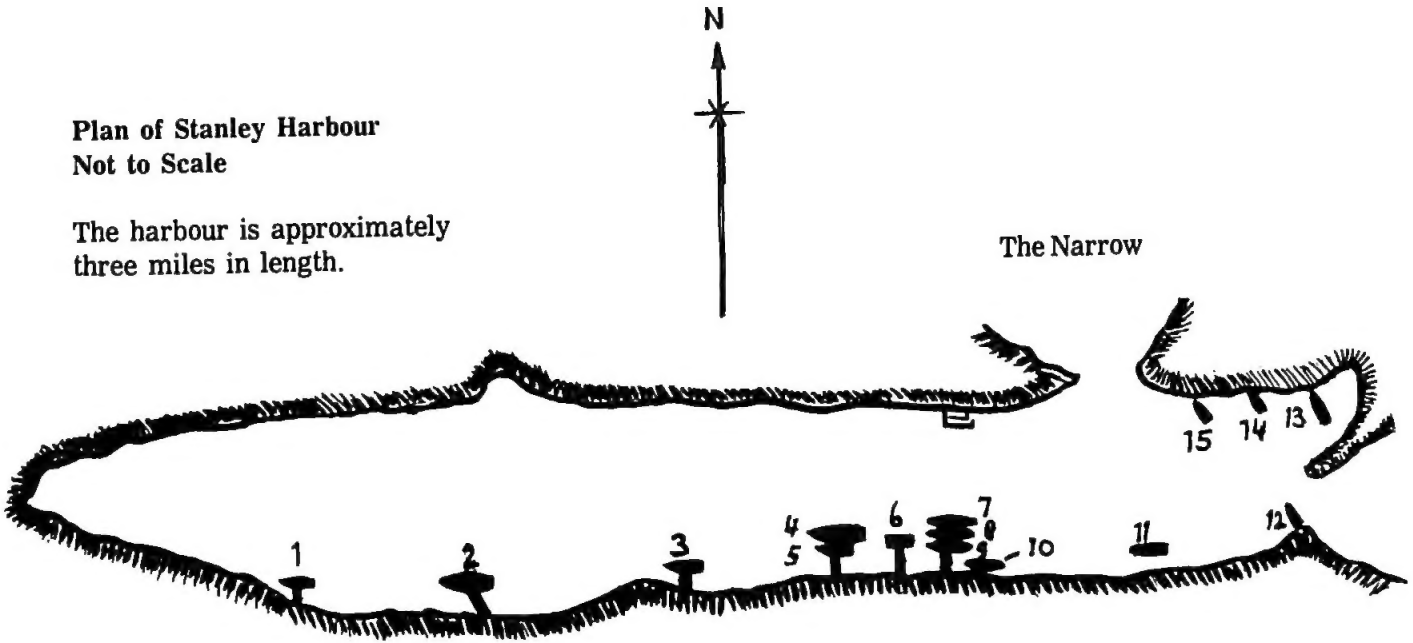
His research is careful and the canvas is large—a wreck chart, for example, that his predecessor as resident maritime historian, Karl Lellman, had worked on shows a bristling encirclement of heroics and disaster ringing the Islands.

John Smith has here limned and described the hulks literally in sight of his own house on the hillside. He published this work originally on a mineograph press in Port Stanley three years ago. Peter Stanford of South Street Seaport decided that this fascinating booklet deserved wider distribution and hence this new edition. May there be more such publications as John Smith works his rich trove.

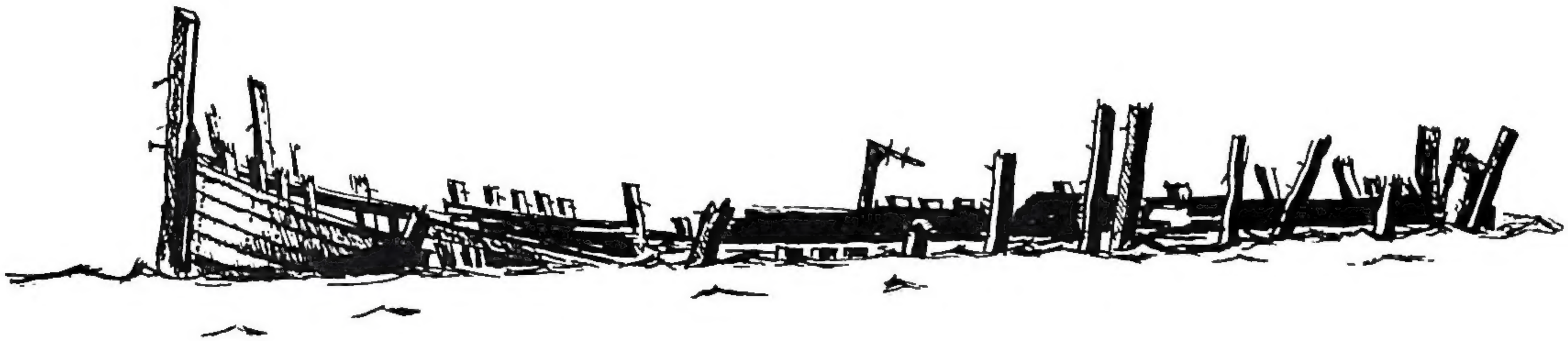
Karl Kortum Director
San Francisco Maritime Museum
January 20, 1973

Plan of Stanley Harbour
Not to Scale

The harbour is approximately three miles in length.



1. CAPRICORN
2. JHELUM
3. MARGARET
4. CHARLES COOPER
5. ACTAEON
6. PUBLIC JETTY
7. EGERIA
8. WILLIAM SHAND
9. SNOW SQUALL
10. FLEETWING
11. AFTERGLOW
12. GOLDEN CHANCE
13. LADY ELIZABETH
14. PLYM
15. SAMSON



CAPRICORN

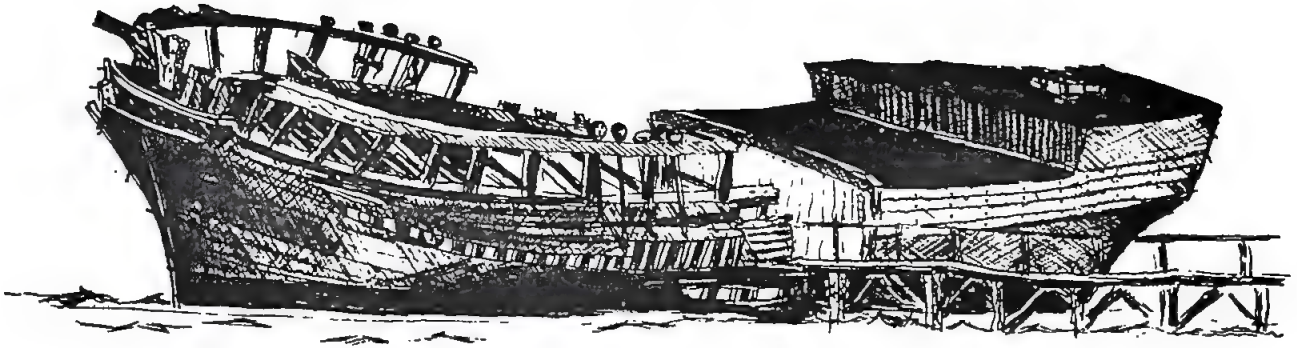
Capricorn

All that now remains of this pretty little 380 ton Welsh barque, built at Swansea in 1829, can be seen a little to the Eastward of the Falkland Islands Government Air Service Hangar. Of all the hulks that remain in the harbour, she is the least recognisable.

In the closing months of 1881 she sailed from Swansea with a cargo of coal, bound for the West coast of South-America, and by February 1882 was off Cape Horn in very heavy weather. It was at this time that her cargo of coal was discovered to be on fire. Her Master then sailed her up under the lee of Staten Island, a little to the North East of Cape Horn. By that time the fire had taken such a hold that the only way of extinguishing it was to scuttle the vessel in shallow water. This they did. The vessel was then pumped out and refloated.

The severe damage caused by the seas off Cape Horn, the fire, and of course the scuttling, compelled the Master to make for the Falkland Islands where he hoped to carry out repairs. However, soon after her arrival in Stanley the CAPRICORN was surveyed and condemned as being unseaworthy.

She was purchased by Messrs. Dean for use as a storage hulk and lighter and remained afloat for many years in the harbour. In 1942 she was moved to the place where she now lies and was again scuttled, this time for good. She formed the head of a small jetty which was used by the troops stationed here during the war years.



JHELUM

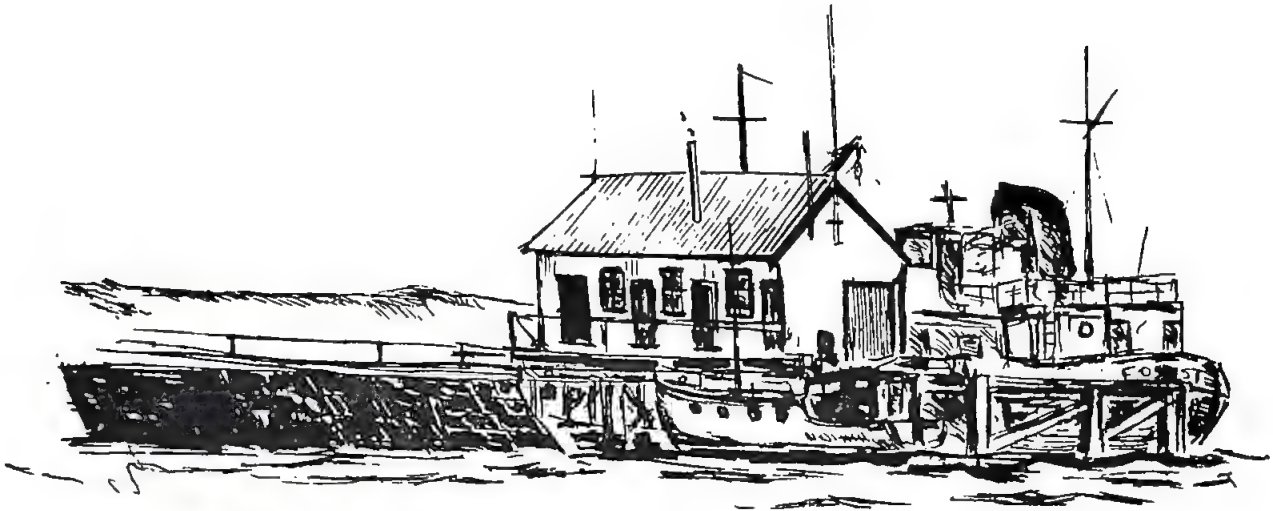
Jhelum

The hulk of this fine old vessel lies at the head of Packe's Jetty, opposite the Colonial Secretary's residence, Sulivan House. She has been described as the best surviving example of this type of vessel left in the world today.

JHELUM was a British 428 ton wood barque 123 feet in length with a beam of 27 feet. She was built at Liverpool in 1849, by Messrs. Steele, and is typical of the East Indiaman type, bluff bowed and full bodied, closely resembling a frigate of that period. A great deal of mahogany was used in her construction and she is copper fastened as well as being treenailed below the waterline.

She started her last voyage from Callao - bound for Dunkirk—on the 13th of July 1870 in a very much overloaded state and had a difficult time rounding the Horn. She put into Stanley in a sinking condition on August the 18th of that year and her condition was such that her crew refused to put to sea in her again. After a survey she was condemned and scuttled.

Her Master on her last voyage was Captain Beaglholm, and her owners were Widdicome and Bell.



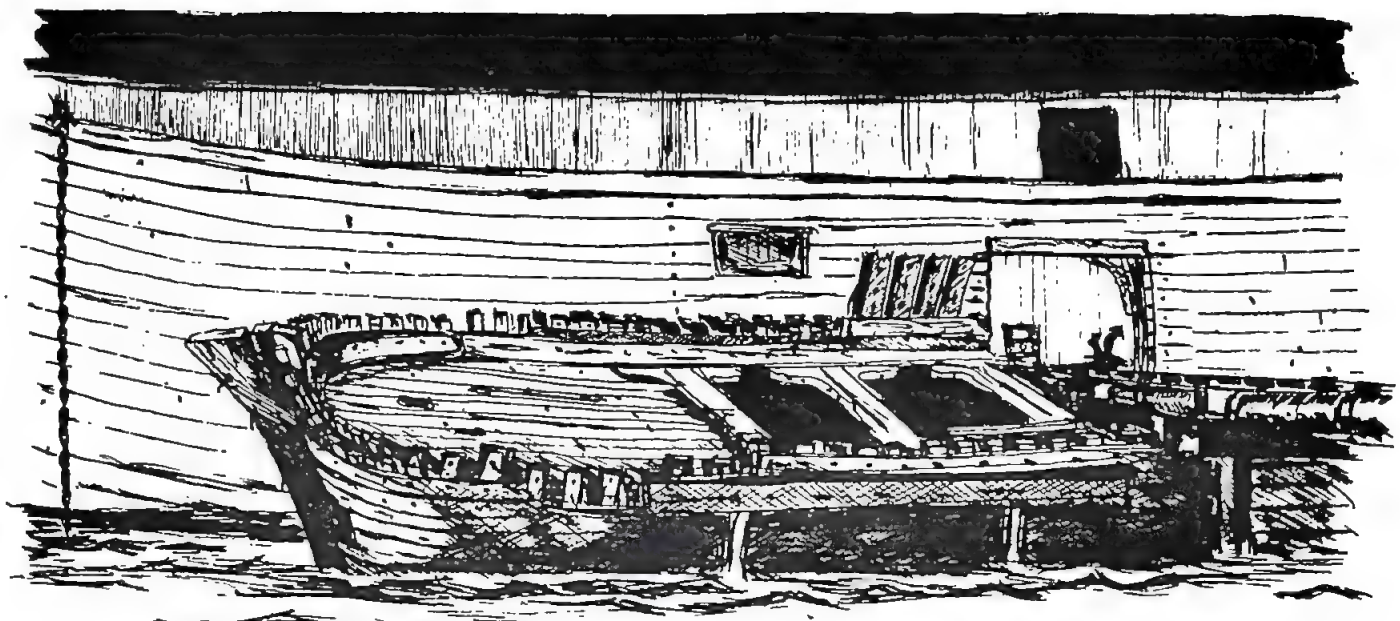
MARGARET

Margaret

Not very much can be seen of this old vessel unless one actually gets underneath the Government Jetty, and there you can see the hull cut down to the tween decks and filled with rubble, the whole lot being used as a base for the jetty and the Air Service Office.

The MARGARET was a British 615 ton barque, and she arrived in Stanley on August the 11th, 1850, under the command of Captain D. Till. She was 6 months and 22 days out on a voyage from Liverpool to Valparaiso badly overloaded with a cargo of coal and cannonballs. She had spent two months endeavouring to round Cape Horn. Captain Till eventually gave up and as the vessel was leaky and in need of repair, put back to Stanley.

The usual survey and condemning followed, but she remained afloat in the harbour for some years. During this time, in 1853, she did useful service to the GREAT BRITAIN by taking on 400 tons of coal which had been specially sent out from England in the ship CHESTER for Great Britain's furnaces to enable her to continue her voyage from Melbourne to The United Kingdom under steam as well as sail.



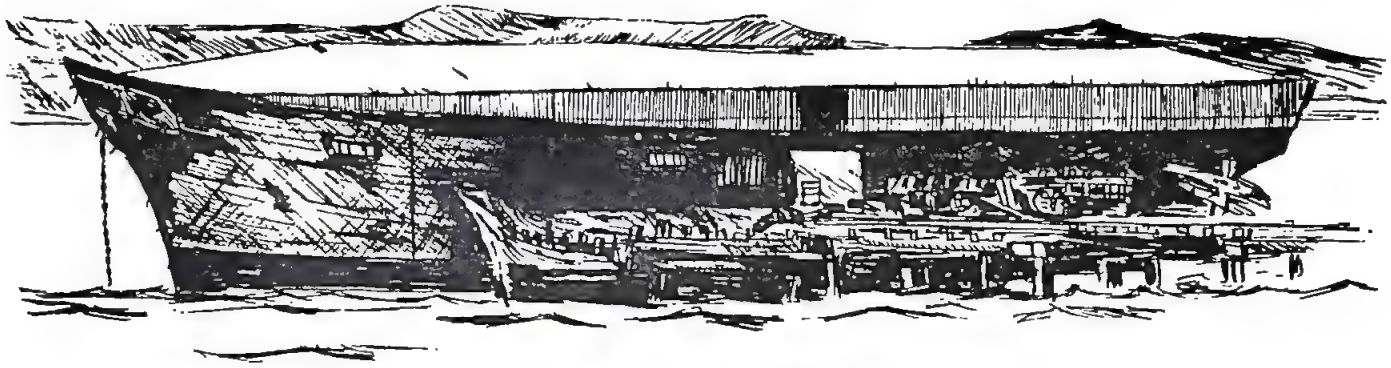
ACTAEON

Actaeon

What remains of this 561 ton barque,built at Miramichi, New Brunswick in 1838, lies well embedded in the mud on the inboard side of the CHARLES COOPER. She has been cut down to her tween decks and did many years useful service as a jetty. Her forward end is still practically intact and it is well worth while to look at her massive construction about the stempost. It makes one wonder how such huge pieces of timber could be hewn and bent into such shapes. Not much of the after end remains, but upon what does remain is piled a fine collection of nautical junk; there are iron capstans, two very interesting wooden windlass-barrels, great mooring swivels which I think may have been the ones used to moor the GREAT BRITAIN in the harbour, and a host of other miscellaneous items.

The ACTAEON put into Stanley on the 27th of January 1853, with Captain Robertson in command. She was on voyage from Liverpool to San Francisco with a cargo of 800 tons of coal. 154 days out, she gave up the attempt to round Cape Horn and put back to the Falklands for repairs where she suffered the fate of scuttling after an unfavorable survey.

The jetty leading to the ACTAEON and the CHARLES COOPER (which, at the time of writing is partly dismantled) is of considerable interest as the longitudinal supports are some of the great steel yards from the FENNIA, and the pitch pine timber forming the top of the jetty was taken from the tween deck of the GREAT BRITAIN. Some pieces of this decking were 64 feet in length.



CHARLES COOPER

Charles Cooper

The CHARLES COOPER is the best preserved of our old wooden hulks and is at the head of the jetty opposite the Falkland Islands Co. West Store.

This fine vessel is recorded in the Colonial Shipping Register as arriving in Stanley on the 25th of September 1866. She is described as being an American Wood ship of 850 tons, 92 days out on passage from Liverpool to Melbourne with a cargo of coal. Her Commander was Captain Dewson. A note in the register says that she was 'leaky and in need of repairs,' and it would appear that repairs proved too costly and she was sold locally.

CHARLES COOPER was the last American packet ship to sail out of South Street, New York, where she began her days in November, 1856 sailing in the Leyton and Hurlbuts Line of Antwerp Packets.

The interior of the vessel is in a remarkable state of preservation due to the alloy roof which covers her maindeck. A little of her original maindecking still exists. It extends from the hole in the deck through which the foremast passed as far aft as the mainmast. Rough boarding was at one time laid in place of the rest of her maindeck, but this has now been removed, and its removal has revealed in wonderful detail the arrangement of great wooden crooks and knees ets. which formed the strengthening at the points in the deck where the masts were.

The great transom stern of the CHARLES COOPER must surely have been one of the best examples of the wood carvers' craft at the time of her building.

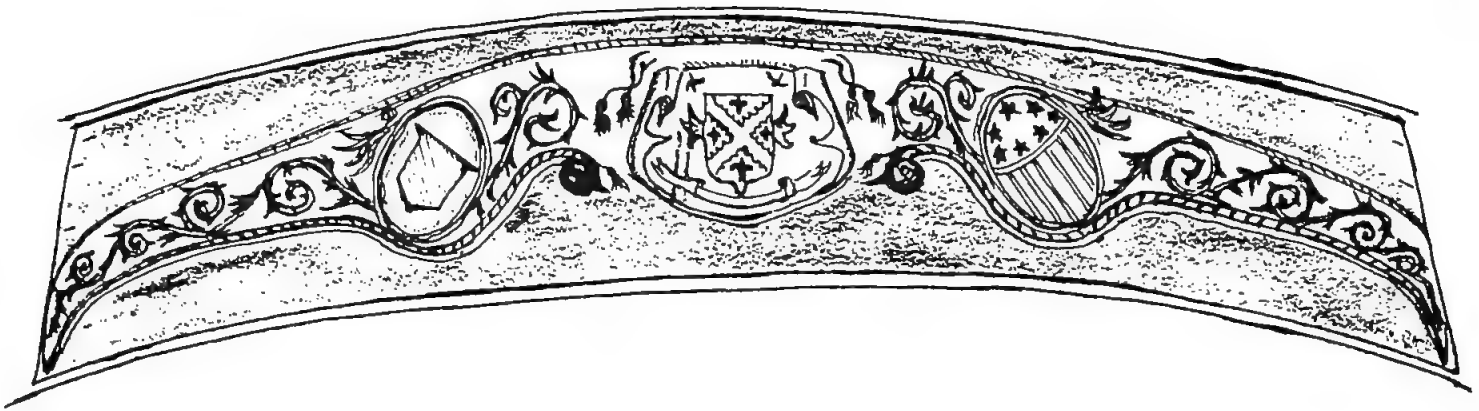
The carving extends for the whole width of her transom, just under thirty two feet, and for threse parts of its depth. It depicts three massive shields surrounded and flanked by carved drapery and foliage.

The centre shield is resting on what appears to be draped material and has a large scroll beneath it. Unfortunately the weather over the last hundred years has eroded the inscription. The shield is divided diagonally in the form of a St. Andrew's cross and in the spaces so formed are fleur-de-lis.

The right hand shield is oval in shape and is divided horizontally for two thirds of the height from its base. In the top section are seven stars and in the lower section, vertical stripes.

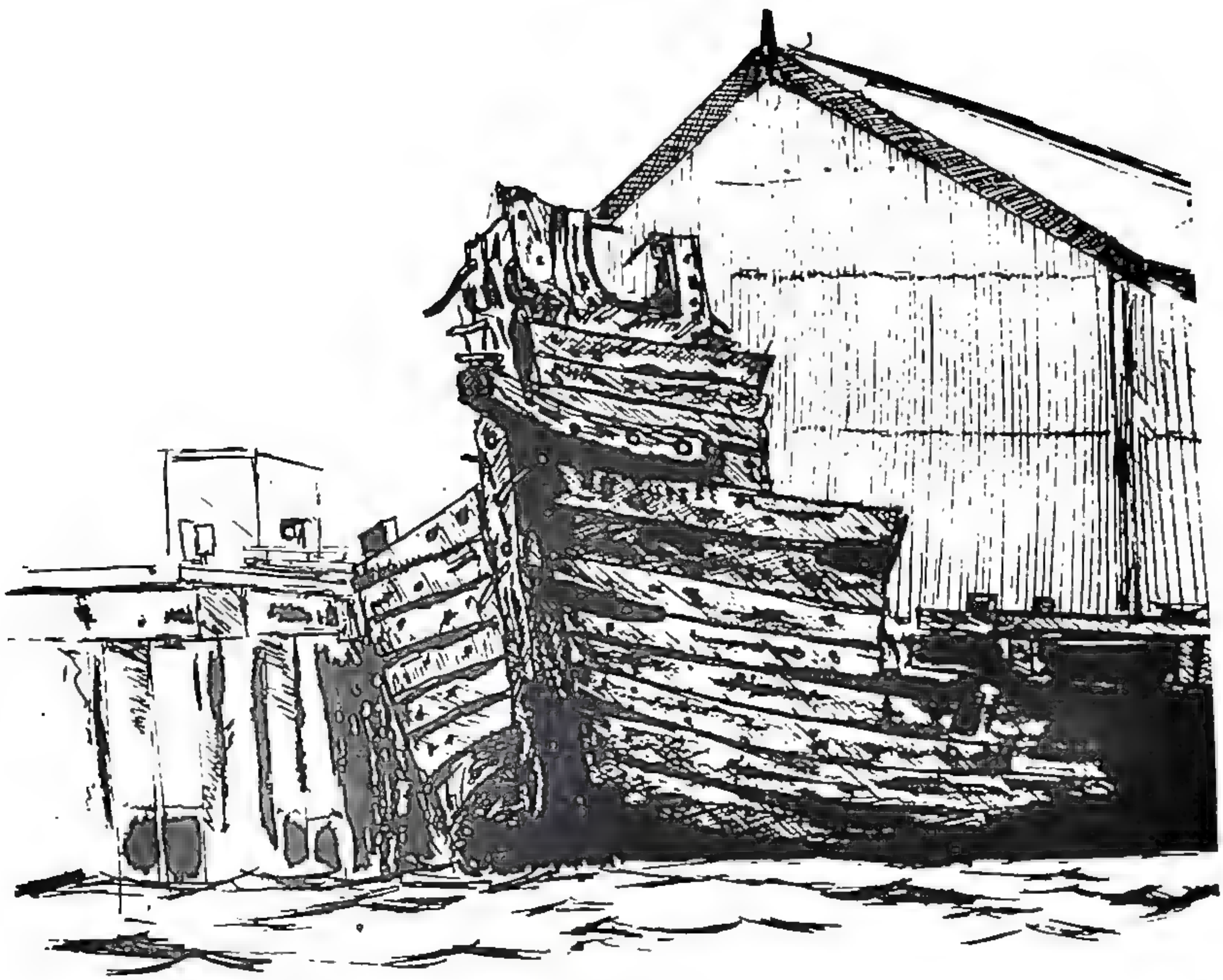
The left hand shield is so badly eroded that no details of the device are left.

In 1968 the CHARLES COOPER was acquired by the South Street Seaport Museum of New York who intend to move her to New York to be restored and placed among other old timers, to recreate in the heart of the City, the old seaport of New York.



CHARLES COOPER

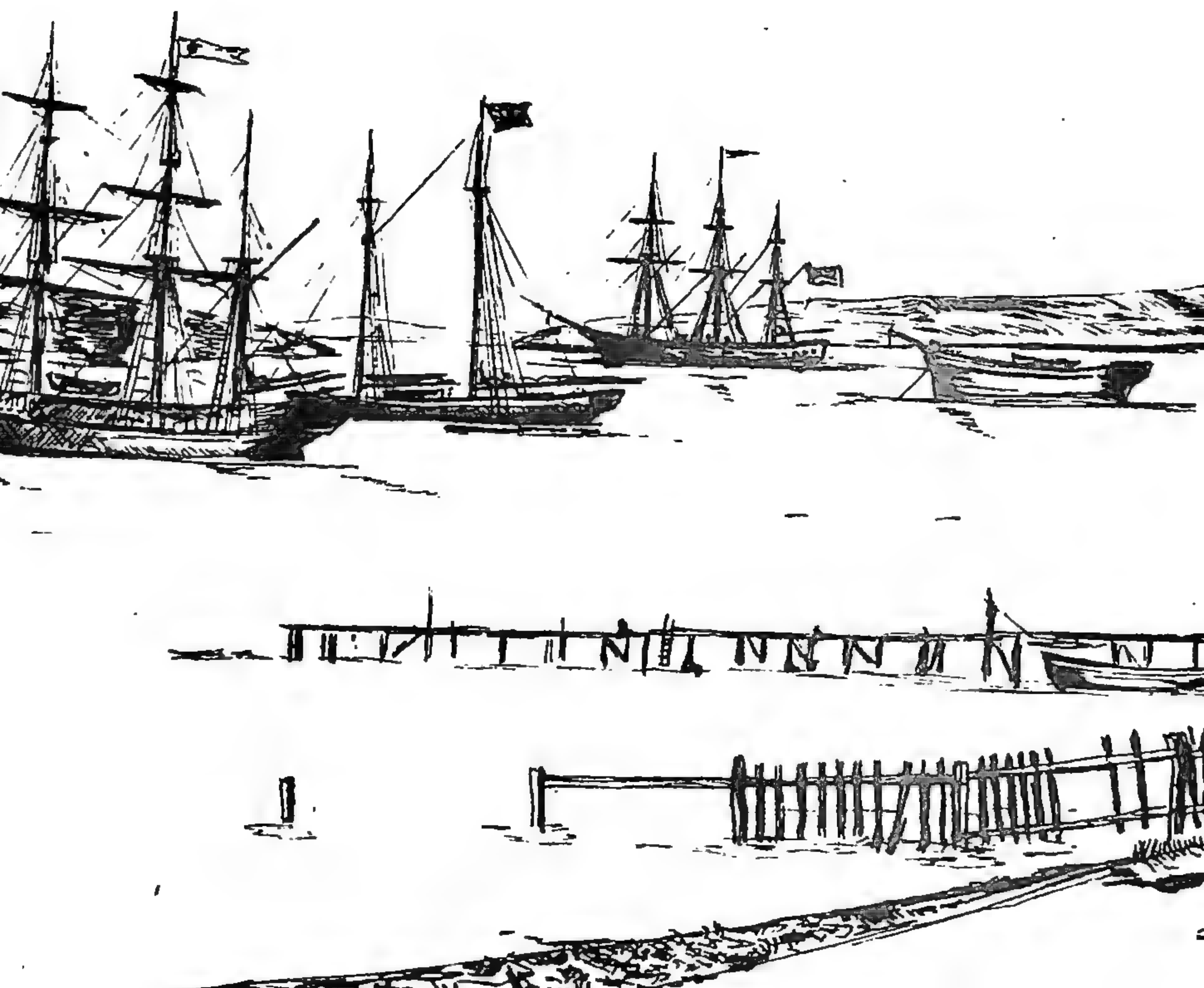
William Shand



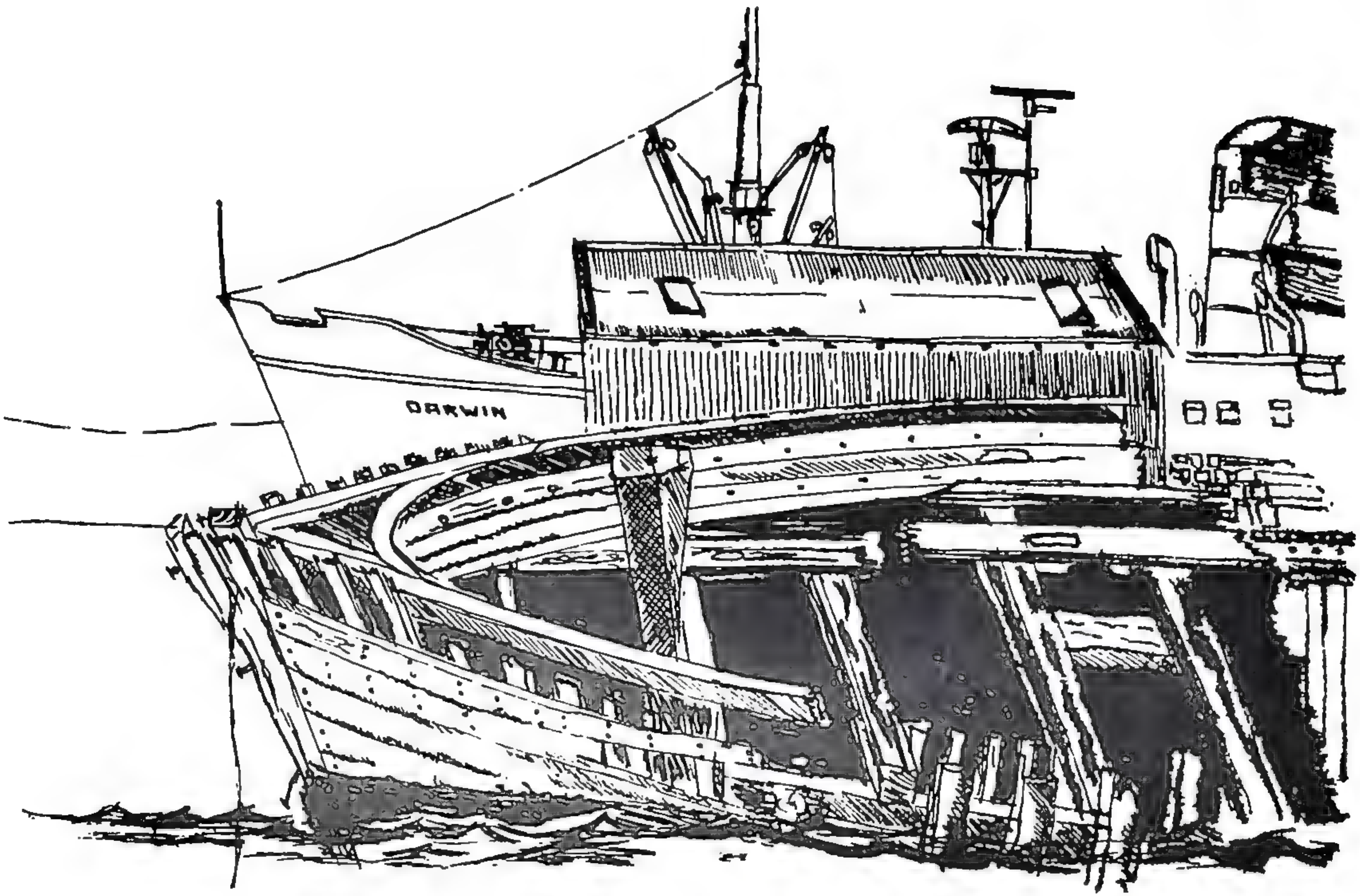
The best view of this vessel can be obtained from the Public Jetty, where her bows can be seen alongside those of the SNOW SQUALL.

The WILLIAM SHAND was a 432 ton British barque built at Greenock in 1839. She first put into Stanley on the 1st, of February, 1859, and stayed there undergoing repairs until the 17th. She was 98 days out on voyage from Liverpool to Valparaiso with a cargo of coal commanded by Captain Waller, and carried a crew of 19.

The 16th of April that year saw her back in Stanley once more so badly battered by the Cape Horn seas that she was condemned.



24th FEBRUARY, 1871



SNOW SQUALL

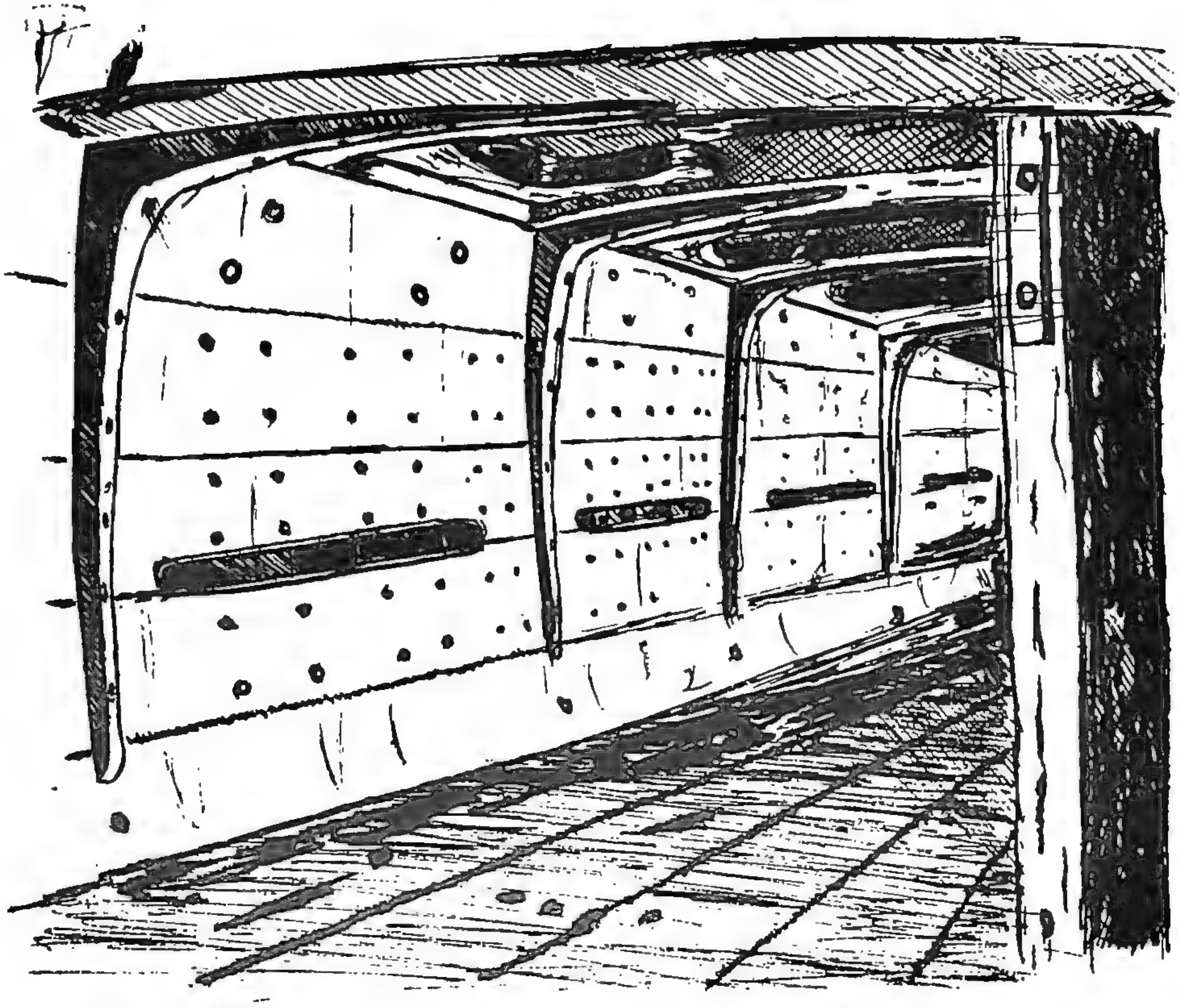
Snow Squall

We move on now to the area of the Falkland Islands Co., East Jetty where can be seen the remains of three hulks at the jetty head. The first of these to be seen as one walks up the jetty from the road is the American Clipper SNOW SQUALL which put into Stanley on the 2nd of March, 1864, after suffering much damage trying to battle her way round Cape Horn. She had been driven ashore in the Straits of Le Maire, which caused severe straining to some of her planks and damage to her rudder.

She was 59 days out on voyage from New York to San Francisco with a general cargo. Captain J. Dillingham was in command with a crew of fourteen.

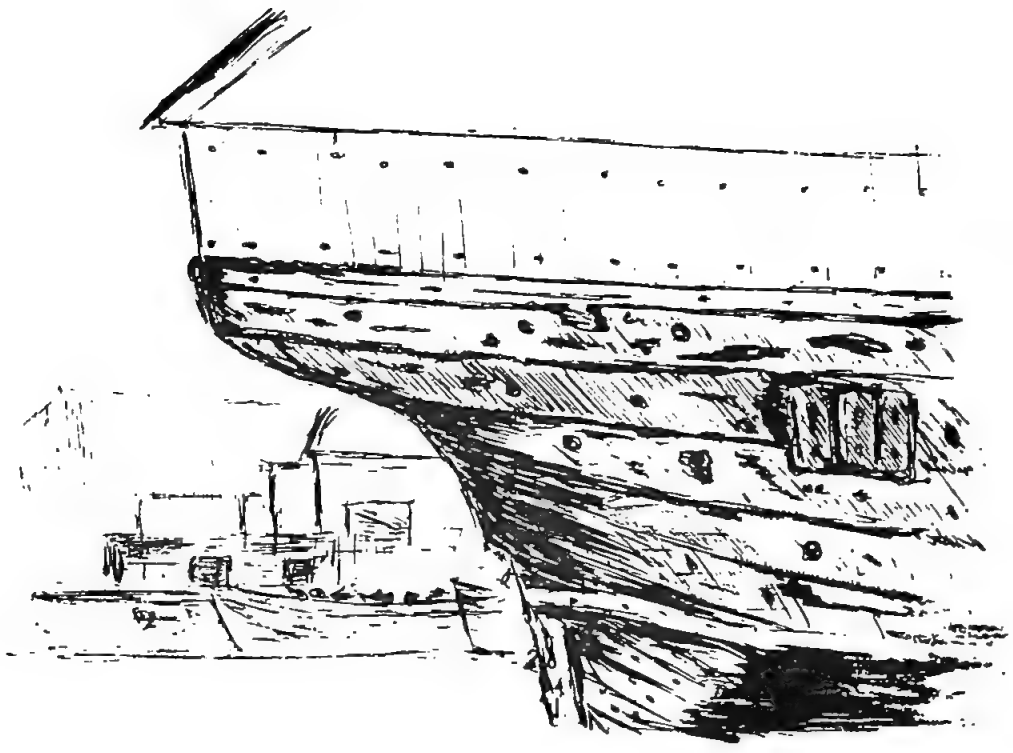
The SNOW SQUALL was built in 1851 by Alfred Butler at Cape Elizabeth for Charles R. Green of New York who still owned her when she arrived in Stanley. During her career she had a narrow escape when she met up with the Confederate ship TUSCALOOSA off the Cape of Good Hope. A vessel was sighted one afternoon and as soon as the two ships came close to one another the American flag was run up on the SNOW SQUALL. The same flag was run up on the stranger, which by that time, was so close that they could shout to each other. Suddenly the TUSCALOOSA (as she was found to be) opened up her gunports and fired her cannon and at the same time hauled down the Stars and Stripes and hoisted the Confederate flag. By great seamanship Captain Dillingham managed to get the SNOW SQUALL to windward of the TUSCALOOSA and to outsail her. By nightfall the TUSCALOOSA was well astern and the SNOW SQUALL out of danger.

All that remains of the SNOW SQUALL today is the forward section which shows the fine lines of the bow which were typical of the American clippers.



EGERIA

Egeria

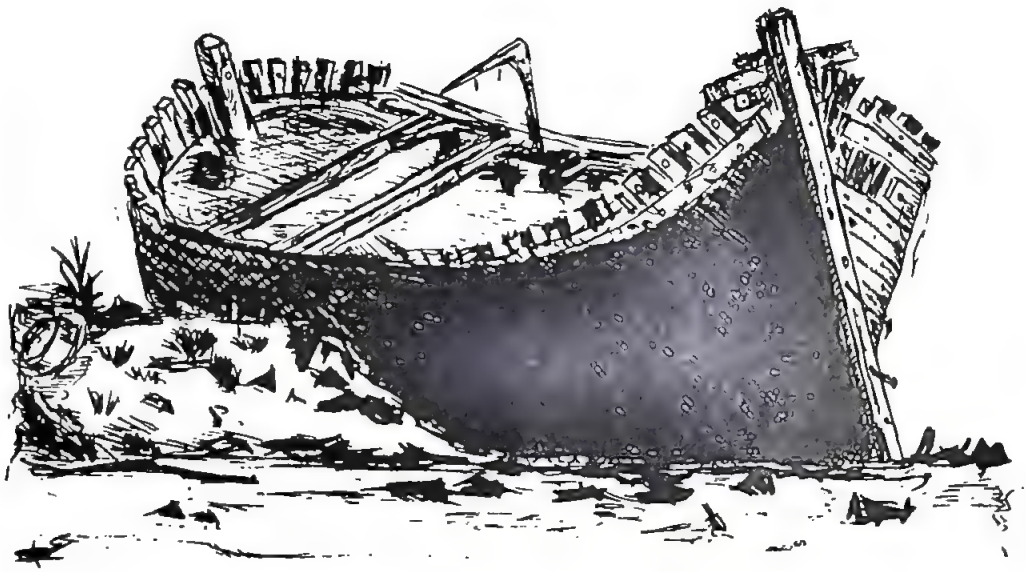


The after end of this old vessel can be seen at the Falkland Islands Company's East Jetty, roofed with corrugated alloy and still used as a storage space for wool and miscellaneous cargo.

She put into Stanley on the 12th of September, 1872, having put back from Cape Horn, 95 days out on a voyage from London to Callao with a cargo of cement and coal. The Shipping Register describes her as being "leaky and damaged" and she was eventually scuttled on the outboard side of the WILLIAM SHAND.

EGERIA was a barque of 1066 tons. She was built at Quebec in 1858 and was commanded by Captain M.H. Foster.

Fleetwing

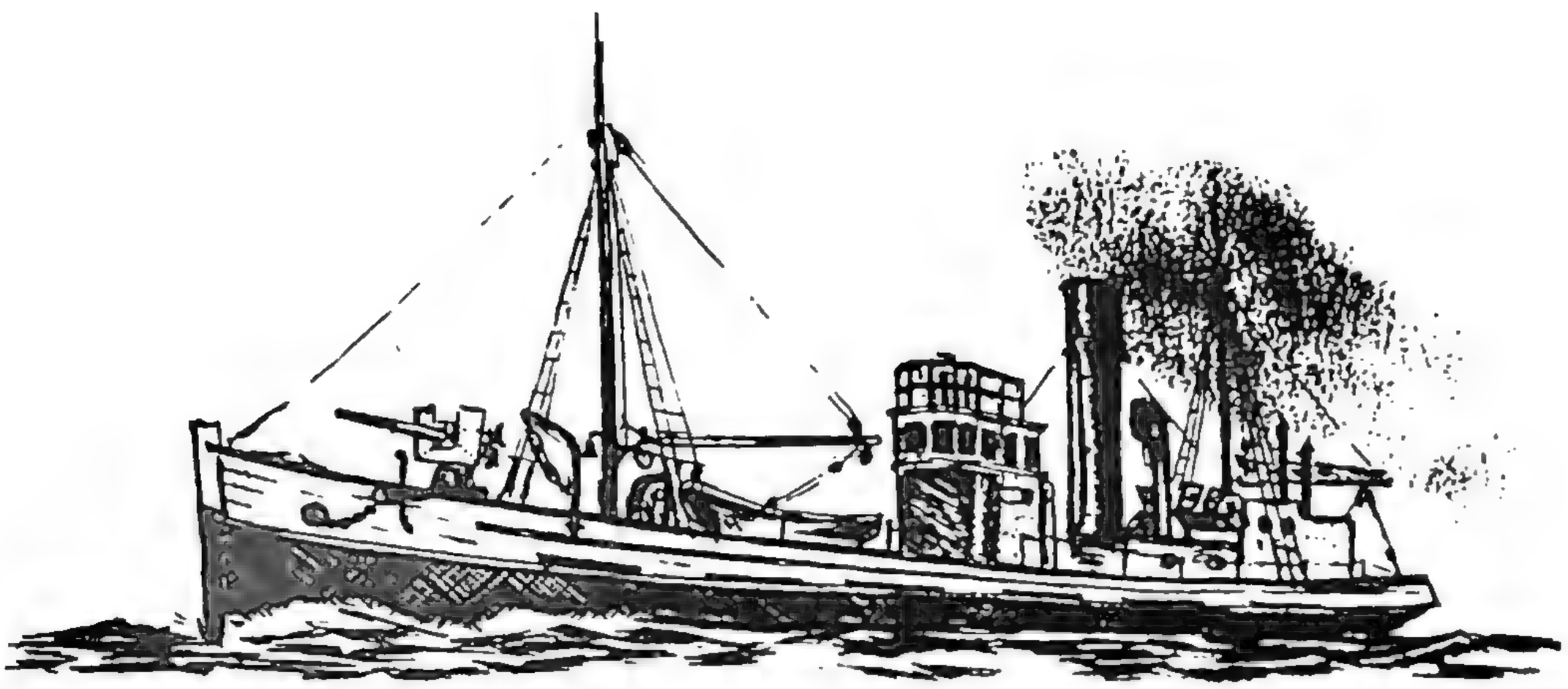


The FLEETWING is beached on the foreshore opposite the offices of the Falkland Islands Company Ltd.

She was a 242 ton Brig, 107 ft. long with a beam of 25 ft. and was built by Messrs. Jones at Portmadoc, Wales, in 1874. In 1898 she was fitted with a new keel and a new deck.

Not much is known about the circumstances of her arrival in Stanley except that she arrived on October 30th, 1911, with a cargo of coal and was at that time registered at Carnarvon.

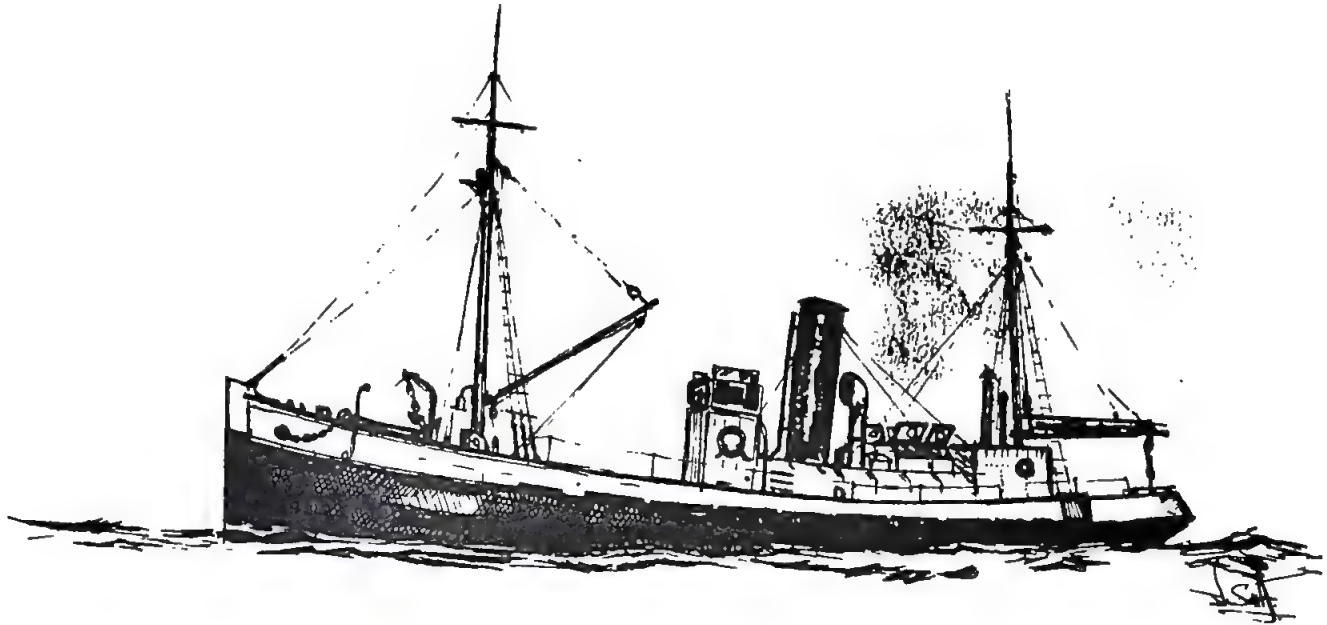
Afterglow



The AFTERGLOW lies beached to the east of Stanley just opposite the Narrows. She was built as a drifter in England in 1918 by John Chambers at Lowestoft and arrived in the Colony in the early 1920s for duty as an armed patrol vessel to protect the Fur Seal Rookeries.

In 1931 she was taken over by the Falkland Islands and Dependencies Sealing Company and her name was changed to PORT RICHARD.

During the 1939 - 1945 war years she was taken over by the Royal Navy and again did service around the Falklands as an armed patrol vessel as H.M.S. AFTERGLOW.



GOLDEN CHANCE

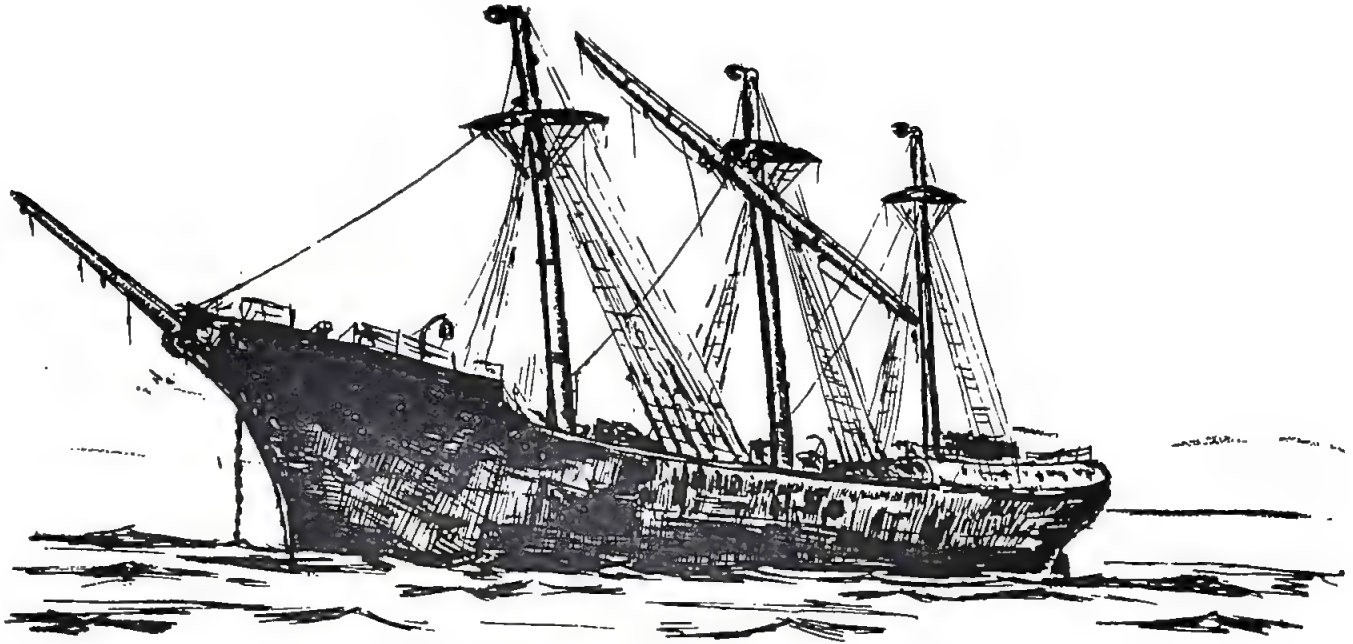
Golden Chance

The GOLDEN CHANCE lies beached at the Canache at the extreme eastern end of the harbour. The GOLDEN CHANCE and the AFTERGLOW were very similar in appearance, both having been built on the East coast of England as steam drifters.

The GOLDEN CHANCE was launched at Lowestoft in 1914 from the yard of Messrs. John Chambers Ltd. She was a little under 90 tons, was 84 feet long and had a beam of 19 feet.

In her forty fifth year, 1949, the GOLDEN CHANCE arrived in the Falklands having been acquired by the Colonial Development Corporation for service in the South Atlantic Sealing Company, which was based at Port Albermarle in the West Falklands. The company was not a success and ceased to operate towards the end of 1952.

Her engine was built by Messrs. Crabtree & Co. Ltd. of Great Yarmouth and is described as being a compound surface condensing direct acting inverted cylinder, with cylinder diameters of 10¼ inches and 24 inches the stroke being 16 inches. Her boiler was constructed by Messrs. Roby Bros. of Stockton on Tees.



LADY ELIZABETH

Lady Elizabeth

The LADY ELIZABETH lies beached at the eastern end of Stanley harbour at Whalebone Cove. She arrived in the Falklands on March the 13th, 1913, under the Norwegian flag, on a voyage from Vancouver to Delagoa Bay with a cargo of lumber. She struck the Uranie rock in the entrance to Berkley Sound to the North East of Stanley and was so badly damaged that after examination it was decided to dispose of her in the Falklands rather than stand the heavy cost of repairs. She served as a floating warehouse in the harbour for many years until she was put ashore in Whalebone Cove on the 17th of February, 1936.

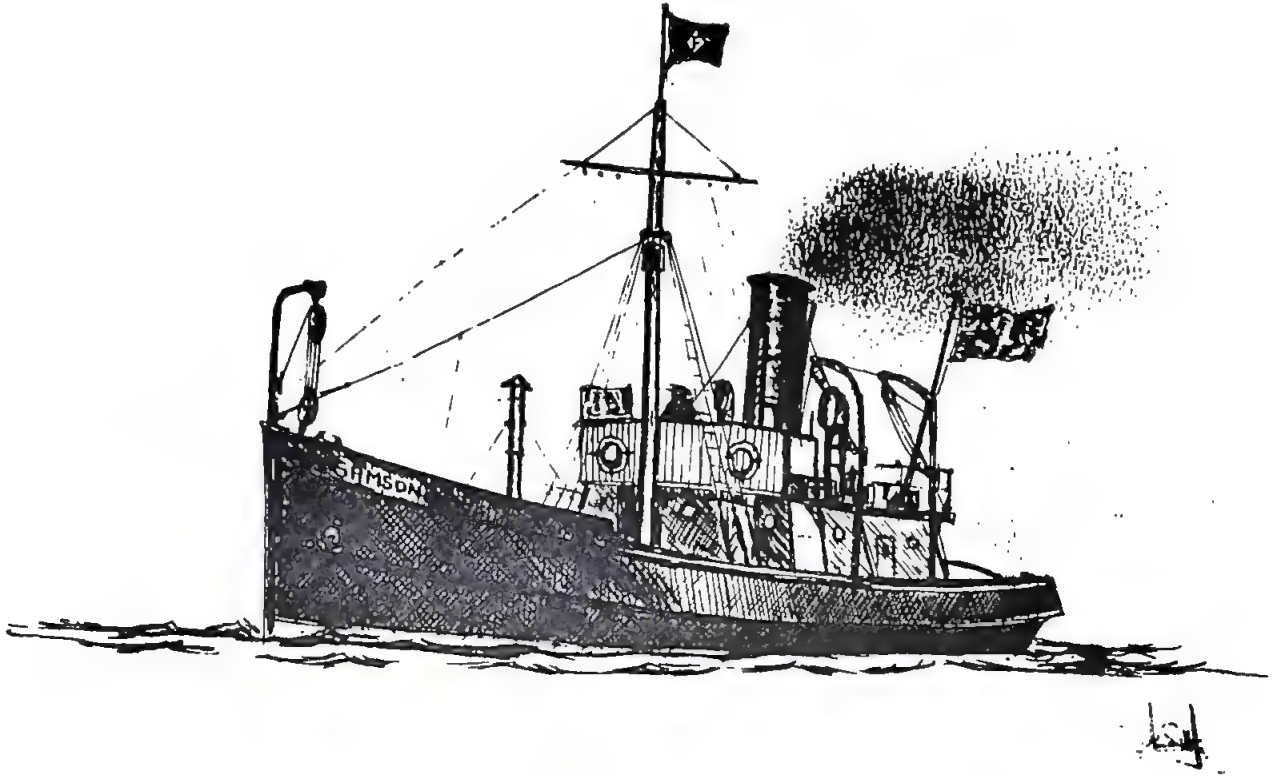
She was built in 1879 at Sunderland, by R. Thompson Jr. Her registered tonnage was 1208, her length 223 ft. and her beam 35 ft. During her life she changed hands several times; at one period being owned by G.C. Karran and registered at Castletown in the Isle of Man.

Plym

The remains of the PLYM are to be seen on the North Eastern shore of the harbour near those of the SAMSON. This tough little vessel did many years of useful service in the harbour as a steam tug. She was built at Plymouth in 1903 by Messrs. Willoughby Brothers; her length was 50 ft. and her beam 10 ft.

At the time of writing I have been unable to trace a photograph of her, but the following details of her engine may be of some interest. It was built by the Willoughby Brothers and is described as having two cylinders, one of 7" diameter and the other of 14" diameter with a stroke of 12." According to the records this combination gave her a speed of 8 knots.

She was converted to be used as a lighter in 1929 and sometime afterward towards the end of the 1930s she was beached at the place where she now lies.



SAMSON

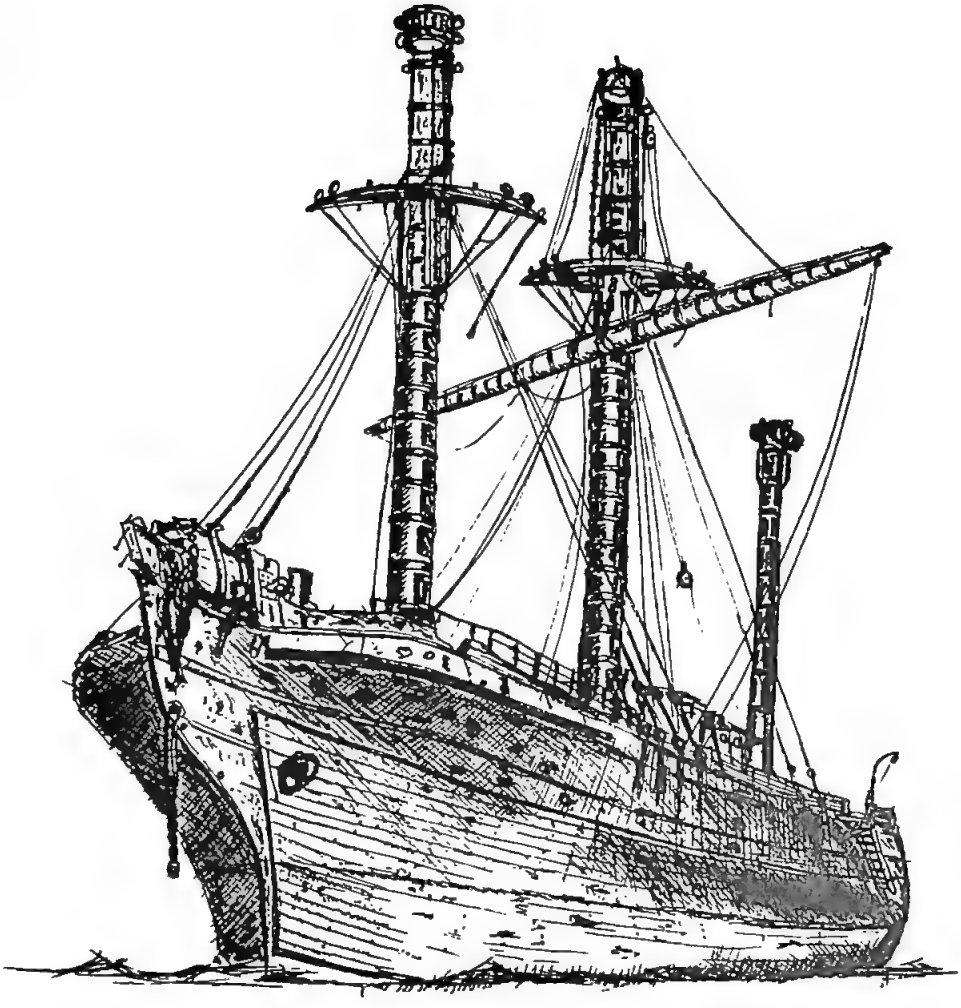
Samson

The hulk of the steam tug SAMSON lies at the North Eastern side of the harbour, close to the LADY ELIZABETH. She was built by Earls and Co. at Hull in 1888 but did not arrive for service in the Falklands until July 20th, 1900. Her arrival was brought about by the complaints of ship-masters who often stated that had there been a powerful tug at Port Stanley many lives and ships could have been spared the fate of ending their days on the treacherous Billy Rock in the entrance of Port William, the outer harbour. Only four years previously, during the winter of 1896, the big American full rigged ship, CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, was totally lost with all hands after being swept on to the Billy Rock. The most powerful craft at that time in Stanley was the steam launch SISSIE which stood by helplessly while the crew shouted from the rigging, "Come and save us."

On December 24th, 1910 SAMSON towed into Port Stanley the British full-rigged ship WAVERTREE, dismasted off Cape Horn. This ship was condemned, served her time as a hulk at Punta Arenas, Chile and Buenos Aires, and is today part of the museum fleet of the South Street Seaport Museum in New York.

The SAMSON proved her worth during a wild night in November, 1912 when the P.S.N.C. liner ORAVIA went up on the Billy Rock. Captain Thomas took the SAMSON in alongside the stricken liner which was surging and grinding on the rock in the heavy seas and brought off many of the passengers and crew.

SAMSON was 94 ft. long, with a beam of 17 ft. She was powered by a triple expansion 3 cylinder engine, the cylinder diameters being 12½", 18½', and 32" and the stroke 21."



GREAT BRITAIN

Great Britain

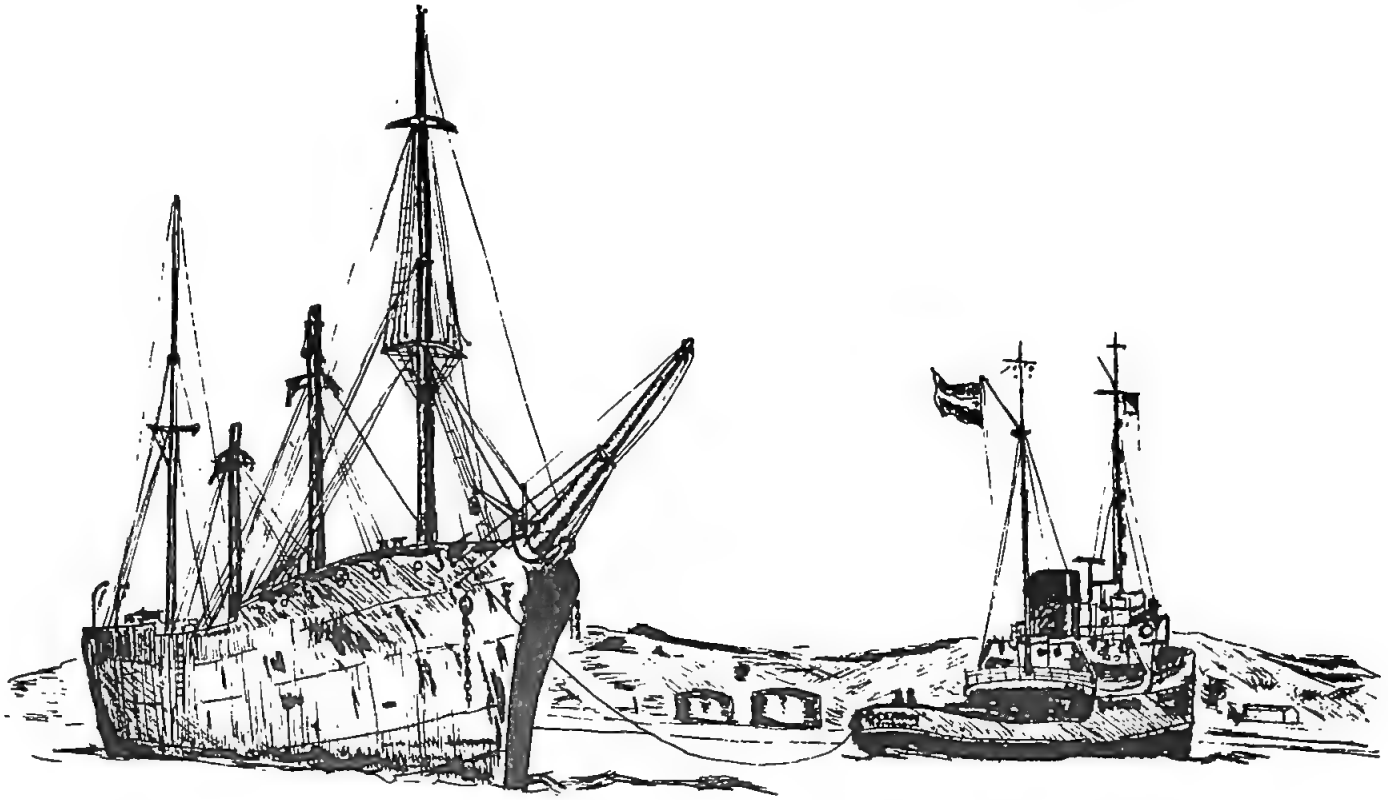
This ship, probably the most historic steam vessel existing today, spent 84 years in the Falkland Islands; a half century as a prominent fixture of Port Stanley Harbor, and the remaining period abandoned in Sparrow Cove a short distance away.

The GREAT BRITAIN was launched at Bristol, England in 1843, having been designed by Isambard Kingdom Brunel for the North Atlantic passenger trade. A revolutionary vessel in many ways, she was far larger than any other built of iron up to that time. Among her firsts were; first transatlantic liner driven by a propeller, first with water-tight bulkheads, first with a double bottom, and first to have a balanced rudder. She was so much larger than previous ships that current technology in the construction of launching ways was inadequate, and instead a stone-walled drydock was built, to be flooded when the ship was completed.

She sailed the North Atlantic route less than a decade. In 1852, after a major overhaul and alterations, the GREAT BRITAIN was put on the England to Australia run. This lasted until 1876 when she was laid up. In 1882, her engines having been removed, she returned to the Australian run as the world's largest full-rigged ship. Four years later she put into Port Stanley after being damaged off Cape Horn.

The GREAT BRITAIN was sold for use as a hulk, at various times storing wool, grain and coal. During World War I she refueled the British cruisers which took part in the Battle of the Falkland Islands. On April 12, 1937 she was beached and abandoned at Sparrow Cove.

Karl Kortum, Director of the San Francisco Maritime Museum visited the ship in 1966, and immediately began to stir up interest in her in the United States. However, in April, 1968, a British movement was begun and the Americans agreed to step aside. The GREAT BRITAIN was refloated on April 7, 1970. She made the passage to England on a giant barge, arriving at Bristol, June 22, 1970. Today she is undergoing restoration at that port, lying in the same drydock that was built for her over 130 years ago.



FENNIA

Fennia

Although she is no longer with us, no account of the hulks in Stanley harbour would seem complete without the mention of FENNIA, which rode on moorings in the harbour for forty years.

FENNIA was built at Nantes, France, during 1902 as the CHAMPIGNY. She was a large steel four masted barque of 3,200 tons, 312 feet long, with a beam of 45 feet. She had an exceptionally long poop deck under which, during her days as a Finnish training vessel, was the huge classroom and accomodation for fifty cadets.

She sailed under the French flag, always as the CHAMPIGNY until 1921, when she was taken over by an organization in Finland with the splendid name of Aktiebolaget Finska Skolskeppsrederiet Helsingfors which sailed her as a cadet training vessel on normal cargo carrying voyages up until the disastrous trip in 1927. She was so badly beaten by the severe weather off Cape Horn that she was forced to put back to the Falklands; so ended the first part of her career.

The following account of her dismasting contains some extracts from her Log Book and gives a typical picture of the circumstances under which most of the hulks at Stanley ended their days. When reading the account, bear in mind that besides the mountainous seas and the hurricane force wind, the temperature was not far above freezing.

The year 1927—"On the 25th of April passed through the Straits of Lemaire and everything going nicely. Before this all caution was taken to meet the Cape Horn storms; all the best sails were put in use for the first time."

By the 29th, the barometer had fallen to 723mm. and the wind was W.N.W. with a high sea running and heavy rolling. Before dinner one of the topmast backstays carried away in the mizzen rigging and soon afterwards one of the gallant backstays carried away in the same rigging. Work was carried out to prevent further damage and a few hours later all was in good order. The weather still remained the same, very stormy and unsteady. FENNIA was by this time sailing under staysails, topsails and foresail, and sometimes the mainsail.

On Monday the 2nd of May the ship's position was Lat. S. 57.2 Long. W. 74.1. Wind W.S.W. force 6-7 barometer 741 mm. "Made fast the mizzen upper topsail and the mainsail, went about, and had the ship on the port tack."

During the early hours of Tuesday, May the 3rd a hurricane-like squall went over the ship: both watches were called on deck and made fast the fore and main upper topsails. Shortly afterwards the fore upper topsail blew to pieces. Whilst the hands were working at the topsails, the main topmast stay carried away, and the sail was lost, the fall of the mizzentopmast staysail was sprung and that sail blew to pieces.

At 5 a.m. the ship was carrying three lower topsails, a foresail and a staysail; the wind was W.S.W. force 10, barometer 747 mm. and high seas were breaking right over the ship.

A quarter of an hour later some breakage was noticed in the main rigging and soon afterwards came a crash, but because of the darkness it was impossible to see what had fallen or had carried away. At daylight it was seen that the main rigging had parted just by the lower topmast yard and that the whole rigging lay outboard on the starboard side, entangled in the lower rigging, backstays, stays and running gear. Also carried away in the same fall was the fore royal yard and the braces and stays to the fore rigging.

All hands were turned out to try and save the fore and mizzen rigging which had slackened up because the stays had sprung when the main rigging went overboard; the hands also set up the braces in the fore rigging and started to cut away the rigging and wreckage which lay crashing hard against the ship's side as she was rolling. Tried to get the ship to pay off, but this seemed impossible as the towing wreckage worked as a rudder on the starboard side; after a time got up braces in the fore rigging and set the outer jib; could then do little to steer the ship.

At 7:30 a.m. the mizzen topmast fell down and landed thwartships on the halfdeck aft of the mizzen lower mast; the topmast broke about 6 ft. above the mizzen yard which, fortunately, did not come down with it. When the rigging and the topmast came down it made two holes in the half deck and damaged the brace winches. The mizzen topsail yards were cocked up on the starboard side at an angle of 45 degrees.

Squared the yards on the foremast and steered before the wind. Full storm now raging and nothing else could be done. During that forenoon the lower rigging and backstays on the foremast were hove together with capstan bars as tightly as possible to prevent the mast from falling overboard. The same thing was later done to the backstays and lower rigging on the mizzenmast.

That afternoon the wreckage of the mainmast rigging was cleared and stays were rigged up on the other masts to try and save them as there was great danger of their being rolled clean out of the ship.

It was at this time that the decision was made to put back to the Falklands. Six days later FENNIA was under the lee of Cape Pembroke Lighthouse just outside Stanley and was later towed into Stanley harbour. Here she remained doing useful service as a storage hulk for the Falkland Islands Company. During the war years of 1939-1945 she was used to accommodate German prisoners and internees.

As well as the hulks at Stanley there are other items of nautical interest on the jetties and about the town. Perhaps the most noticeable are the capstans, of which there are five.

Two are at the Falkland Islands Company slipway opposite the West Store. Both are in good working order. They are manned whenever a vessel is hauled up on the slip. One is a round-shouldered double-gear type (fig. 1) and the other is a very pretty single-gear Italian capstan decorated with stars cast into the iron work of the head (fig. 2). An unusual feature of this capstan is that there are no whelps on the drum. Unfortunately no one seems to know from which ships either of these capstans came.

In the Government Dockyard is the brass domed capstan (fig. 3) from the big American ship JOHN R. KELLEY which was wrecked in Port William during November 1889. Three men from Stanley were awarded Gold Medals from the President of the United States for their bravery in rescuing the crew from the wreck. Another item of JOHN R. KELLEY interest is the doorstep of the west entrance to the Globe Store. It is made from two millstones which were part of her cargo.

On the beach opposite the remains of the CAPRICORN lies her capstan (fig. 4). It is not a very big one, but is certainly one of the very few remaining capstans used on the tough little Welsh coal and copper ore barks.

The fifth capstan is usually to be found in the author's garden. It is a double-gear, deep chested capstan made by Messrs. Clarke Chapman and it is thought to have come originally from the GREAT BRITAIN.

fig. 1

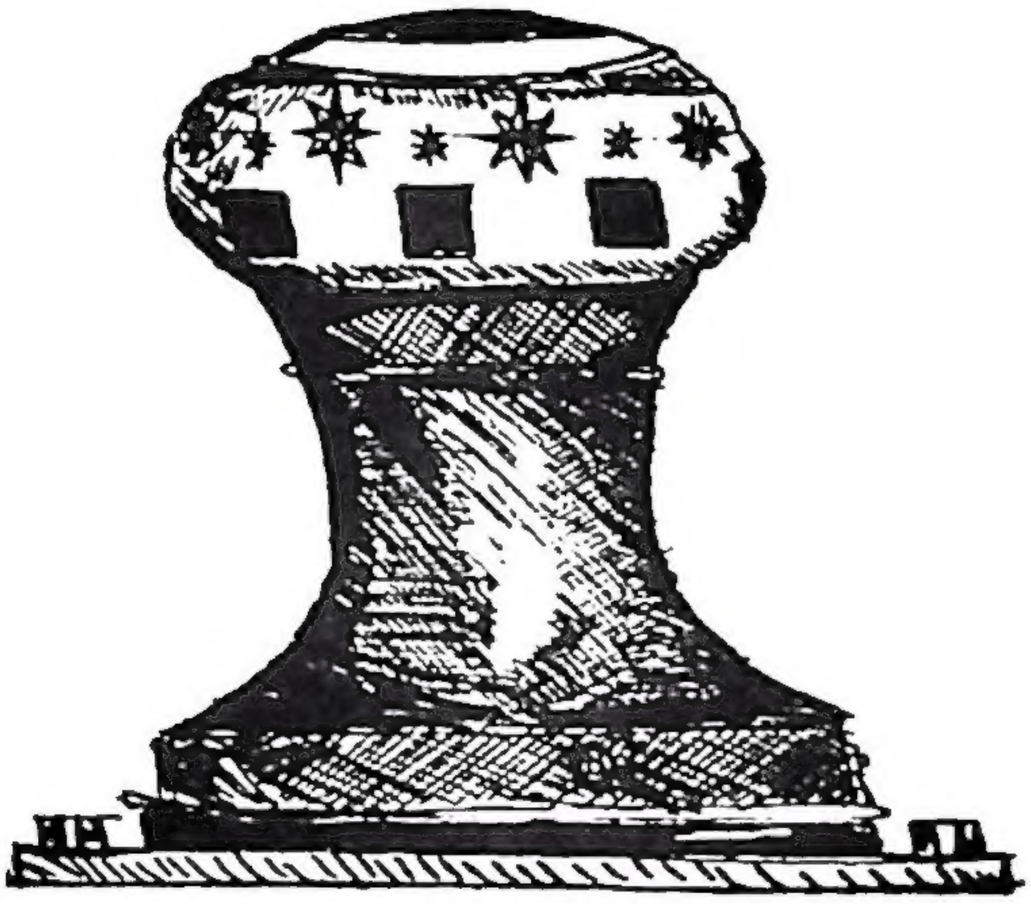


fig. 2

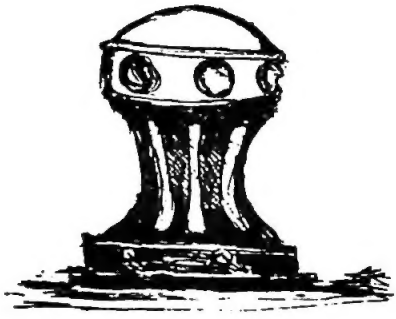


fig. 3

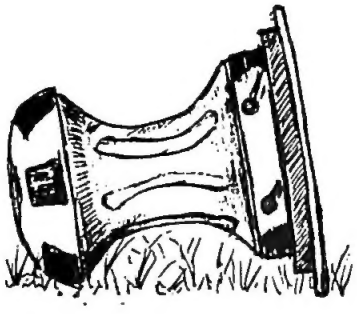


fig. 4

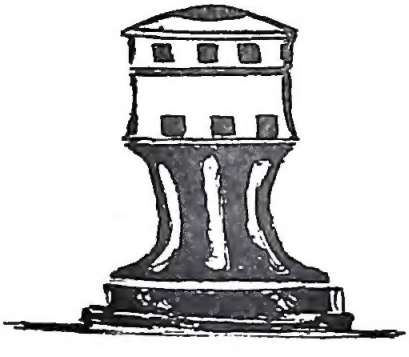


fig. 5